

This right will include freedom to hold opinions and to receive and impart information and ideas without interference by public authority and regardless of frontiers."

The actions by Azerbaijani officials clearly violate these commitments. I truly hope that these government actions are merely an aberration and will be dealt with accordingly and are not the signal of even more repression of religious believers in Azerbaijan.

I would like to commend to my colleagues the work of our Embassy in Baku on religious liberty. Embassy personnel have taken this recent incident very seriously and have followed the situation from the start. I urge those of my colleagues who interact with Azerbaijani Government officials to raise religious liberty issues in their discussions, stressing the essential role that religious liberty—and indeed human rights in general—play in maintaining a free, stable, and democratic civil society.

IN RECOGNITION OF 1999 LAWSUIT
ABUSE AWARENESS WEEK IN
THE STATE OF OHIO

HON. PAUL E. GILLMOR

OF OHIO

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, September 22, 1999

Mr. GILLMOR. Mr. Speaker, I rise to call attention to an important designation this week in the state of Ohio. The week of Sunday, September 19 through Saturday, September 25, 1999, has been officially designated by Ohio Governor Bob Taft as lawsuit Abuse Awareness Week.

The 1999 Lawsuit Abuse Awareness Week campaign attempts to better educate citizens throughout the state of Ohio about the ongoing concerns of the legal problems in our judicial system. During this campaign, the Ohio Citizens Against Lawsuit Abuse (OCALA) has undertaken a public awareness campaign to voice the concerns about lawsuit abuse and draw attention to the impact it has on the state of Ohio. Citizens from across the state have assisted with the campaign to help OCALA spread its message.

Mr. Speaker, the overwhelming rise in lawsuit abuse is not a concern specific to the state of Ohio. Certainly, these problems carry both state and national implications, which affect all Americans. In recent years, our society has become more prone to litigation. In fact, some statistics show the number of lawsuits filed each year approaching 300,000. The sheer number of these lawsuits requires millions of dollars in expenses and thousands of hours from employees. These figures demonstrate that lawsuit abuse is a heavy burden that interferes with our continued economic growth.

As lawsuits continue to climb in number and scope, the impact on our standard of living is evident. Frivolous lawsuits result in higher operating costs for businesses, the withdrawal of products from the marketplace, and the potential decline in growth and overall expansion. Simple economics shows us that these costs are inevitably passed along to consumers and workers in the form of higher prices, lost opportunities, and fewer jobs.

Mr. Speaker, lawsuit abuse is a serious issue facing the United States. As such, it is important for groups like OCALA to be recog-

nized for their efforts in curtailing this abuse. Dedication to change, like that shown by OCALA and other groups, will further the cause to end lawsuit abuse and bring about overall legal reform. I would urge my colleagues to stand and join me in recognizing the week of Sunday, September 19 through Saturday, September 25, 1999, as "Ohio Lawsuit Abuse Awareness Week."

HONORING HILMAR MOORE

HON. TOM DeLAY

OF TEXAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, September 22, 1999

Mr. DELAY. Mr. Speaker, today I would like to honor a man whose dedication and commitment to his community should not go unnoticed. Today, September 22, 1999, marks the 50th anniversary of Hilmar Moore's continuous service as the mayor of Richmond, TX.

The mayor's term is a unique one in Texas and the Nation's history. Mayor Hilmar Moore was appointed to serve an unexpired term for Richmond, TX, on September 22, 1949. Since then he has unselfishly served for the advancement of the community. Mayor Moore has deep-seeded Texas roots. He is descended from several of Stephen F. Austin's original colonists who settled Texas. In fact, Mayor Moore is a life member of the Sons of the Republic of Texas. His family's strong commitment to community has lasted generations and many have served in State and local governments.

From 1970 to the present, the mayor has been and continues to be, a leader in the livestock community. He has served on the Texas & Southwestern Cattle Raisers Association as second vice president, first vice president, and president from 1974–76. He has served on the Beef industry Council of Meat Board as vice chairman from 1979–81 and as chairman from 1981–83. In 1983–84, Mayor Moore served as treasurer of the National Livestock and Meat Board and in 1984–85 as chairman-elect. Also, in 1985, he was named Trustee Emeritus of the Gulf Coast Conservation Association. Mayor Moore has received numerous awards and recognitions from the National Livestock and Meat Board Association, Texas Brahman Breeders Association, and the Golden Spur Award. Presently, along with his mayoral duties Hilmar Moore is the director of the King Ranch.

I wish to extend to Mayor Hilmar Moore my heartfelt congratulations and I know my colleagues here in the U.S. House of Representatives do so as well. It will be a pleasure to continue working with him for the improvement of the city of Richmond and the Fort Bend community.

JOHN NESPOLI HONORED

HON. PAUL E. KANJORSKI

OF PENNSYLVANIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, September 22, 1999

Mr. KANJORSKI. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to pay tribute to Mr. John L. Nespole, who has been named Community Leaders of the Year by the Arthritis Foundation of Eastern Pennsyl-

vania. I am proud to have been asked to participate in this event.

This prestigious award has been described by Arthritis Foundation Chairperson Deborah D. Hannon as an honor "presented to an individual who epitomizes the word 'leader' in both their personal and professional life. The recipient is someone who gives back to their community as a way of thanking them for achieving success in their own life."

John Nespole is the president and chief executive officer of Mercy Health Partners and one of the senior vice presidents of Catholic Healthcare Partners, which makes him responsible for a \$200 million health care system, including a tertiary referral center, community hospitals, skilled nursing facilities, home health care, physician group practice and managed care operations.

In addition, John serves on a large number of diverse community organizations. A native of Berwick, John is a dedicated professional with strong commitment to our region. He is the husband of the former Geri Kamps and the father of twins.

Mr. Speaker, I applaud the Arthritis Foundation for this year's choice for the "Community Leader of the Year" and am pleased to send my year very best wishes to John as he accepts this prestigious honor.

GEORGE NEAVOLL MAKES
THOUGHTFUL CONTRIBUTION TO
MAINE

HON. JOHN ELIAS BALDACCI

OF MAINE

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, September 22, 1999

Mr. BALDACCI. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to pay tribute to George Neavoll, who edited the opinion pages of the Portland Press Herald and the Maine Sunday Telegram newspapers from 1991 until his retirement earlier this month. His readers, myself included, know that he leaves behind very large shoes to fill.

In the words of his colleagues, George Neavoll "set an unapologetically upbeat tone for the opinion pages, wrote extensively about the State's environment and worked to create a consciousness among Mainers that they live in the Atlantic Rim region."

During his time as editorial page editor, Mr. Neavoll championed many causes and highlighted problems in need of attention. From management of our fisheries and protection of our air, land, and water, to the return of passenger rail service in Maine and the need for improved East-West travel routes in our State, George Neavoll enhanced public discourse and made us think.

He also opened up the editorial board meetings to the public, and redesigned the editorial pages to provide more space for letters to the editor and more opportunity for local residents to submit columns.

Throughout his 30-year career in the newspaper business, Mr. Neavoll was recognized for his commitment to excellence numerous times. He received awards for writing, particularly in the areas of environmental protection and human rights. He received a Global Media Award from The Population Institute in 1996; a Human Rights Award from the Portland chapter of Amnesty International in 1995; and the first Portland Bias Crime Task Force's Diversity Bridge Building Award in 1995.